

**NEAT Working Group on  
Promoting Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)  
in Disaster Response**

**Final Report**

**Tokyo  
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# 1. Background

In East Asia, regional integration and cooperation in functional areas, such as economy, finance, food security, environment, education, disaster prevention, and health and medical care, have been promoted through multi-layered regional frameworks centering on ASEAN, which includes ASEAN+3 (APT) and East Asia Summit (EAS). In this context, the key to Asia's future prosperity will be to “ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making,” as stated in Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The World Bank estimates that the loss caused by gender inequality is \$160 trillion, twice the world's GDP. In fact, in Asia, where the birthrate is declining and the population is aging, the active participation of women is expected to enhance the resilience of society.

In the international community, in October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which positioned women as “active actors” in international conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping. Since then, a series of resolutions have been adopted to complement the said resolution. In addition, UN member states are encouraged to formulate their own national action plans to implement the resolution, and as of 2024, 108 countries and territories have done so. Of these, 13 Asian and Pacific countries, including Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, have formulated action plans.

Thus, while WPS is positioned as an essential issue for the international community, the Asia-Pacific region is the region where natural disasters occur most frequently, making it necessary to promote WPS in disaster response. Women are more likely to evacuate while protecting infants and the elderly in the event of a disaster, making them more vulnerable than men. As a result, they tend to experience a higher rate of death than men. In addition, women and girls often face difficult conditions in shelters after evacuation due to lack of supplies, sexual violence, and other factors. These problems are frequently overlooked or neglected because women’s participation in disaster preparation, management, and response is still limited. Enhancing women’s participation and contribution is necessary and indispensable to establish more effective, more inclusive, and more robust policies, plans, and management in disaster response. In this context, it is necessary to

provide protection to women and encourage their active participation in all decision-making processes in disaster management and as actors in responding to disasters. The participation of women will lead to more resilient societies, and it is highly significant to promote regional cooperation in this area in East Asia.

## **2. Discussion Points**

Based on the above background and awareness of the issues, what kind of initiatives should be promoted in East Asia in the future? Particularly in the field of disaster management, it is important to consider (1) how to promote women's participation in the decision-making process, (2) how to promote the participation of female staff involved in disaster management, and (3) how to make progress in utilizing women's perspectives in disaster management. This working group will discuss the agendas mentioned above from broad perspectives, examine possible ideas and options, and prepare from the standpoint of "Track Two" the constructive and concrete policy proposals on "Promoting Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in Disaster Response" for the submission to the APT Summit.

## **3. Discussions at the Working Group meeting**

Fifteen experts from APT countries and the sponsoring organization, the Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR), took part in a working group meeting in Tokyo on 25 July 2024, which was organized in a keynote address. Note that some experts participated online. In the keynote address, each country reported on its experiences in past disasters and the current progress of WPS, and the aforementioned discussion points were also discussed.

## **4. Policy Recommendations provided**

Based on the discussions above, the Working Group on "Promoting Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in Disaster" summarized the following policy recommendations.

1. Enhancing female participation in politics, economy, and social activities from peacetime: To promote WPS in Disaster, it is important to create an environment in which women can be

actively and proactively involved in the decision-making process at all levels of politics, economy, and society. Countries, where women play essential roles in political, economic, and social management and decision-making, are not only proactive in promoting WPS but also have introduced highly effective measures. We must increase the number of females who join the political, economic, and social activities and give them equal rights and opportunities to decide and set up policies and rules, especially in the field of disaster management and response.

2. Establishing an educational program to eliminate unconscious biases of gender roles and discrimination: One of the reasons for the lack of progress in WPS in Disaster is the existence of gender roles and prejudices that have been historically, politically, socially, and culturally constructed. It is essential to eliminate these biases and to create a society in which all people have consideration and imagination for not only women but also children, the elderly, foreigners, and sexual minorities, who are often placed in vulnerable positions when natural disasters occur.
3. Enhancing research on WPS and sharing good practices and lessons: Various policies and practices have been made in East and Southeast Asia to promote WPS in Disasters. It would be beneficial to identify good practices, lessons, and challenges through academic research and share and utilize them to prepare and improve disaster response measures while taking care of women, children, elders, and all other vulnerable people and unleashing women's strengths and potential to contribute to disaster management.

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## **List of Participants**

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